



United States Department  
of Agriculture

National Agricultural  
Statistics Service

Washington Agricultural Statistics Service  
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# Washington Crop Weather

Released: April 18, 2005  
Week Ending: April 17, 2005  
CWP WA-CW1605

## Frost Protection Needed For Tree Fruit Livestock Confined Due to Soggy Pastures

### Field Crops

Rain continued throughout most of the state. Unseasonably cool, wet weather limited agricultural activities in most areas. There were reports of wind, thunderstorms, hail, and snow around the state. However, areas around Kittitas County received very little rain. Some Spokane County winter wheat and bluegrass producers were spraying fields. Whitman County producers were working to seed pulses and attempting to spray winter wheat. Alfalfa growth in Franklin County slowed due to cool weather conditions. Christmas tree growers continued fertilizing trees and applying herbicides. Potato and grain corn planting continued.

### Livestock

Range and pasture conditions were 5% very poor, 22% poor, 26% fair, 46% good, and 1% excellent. Soggy pastures caused livestock in Western Washington to remain confined. Producers also reported delayed forage harvest due to super saturated soils and standing water in fields. On the other end of the spectrum, Whitman County cattle producers were very concerned about pasture loss. They estimated a 50% loss of pasture in the west end of the county because of drought conditions. Oyster harvesting and seed planting operations continued in Pacific County.

### Fruits and Vegetables

In Benton County, frost protection was needed on several days. Grant, Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan Counties reported some scattered frost damage, but most tree fruit continued with adequate to good flower growth. Blueberry growers in Thurston County were mowing cover crops in between rows. Asparagus was emerged and harvesting began in Franklin and Benton Counties.

### Days Suitable for Fieldwork

Week	Days
This Week	4.1
Last Week	4.4

### Moisture and Supply

Item	Percent			
	VS	SH	AD	S
Topsoil	2	22	60	16
Topsoil 5 Year Average	1	13	79	7
Subsoil	22	39	37	2
Subsoil 5 Year Average	2	18	78	2
Irrigation Water	11	14	74	1
Irrigation Water 5 Year Average	0	6	94	0
Hay & Roughage	2	30	67	1

VS=Very Short SH=Short AD=Adequate S=Surplus

### Crop Progress

Crop/Activity	Percent Completed			
	This Week	Last Week	2004	5 Yr. Avg.
Spring Wheat Planted	89	79	93	69
Spring Wheat Emerged	45	35	66	33
Barley Planted	58	48	88	54
Barley Emerged	27	20	59	22
Potatoes Planted	63	40	43	42
Potatoes Emerged	9	2	19	15
Corn Planted	9	2	28	19
Dry Edible Beans Planted	11	9	39	9
Proc. Green Peas Planted	61	39	80	43
Dry Peas Planted	29	18	79	32

### Crop Condition\*

Crop	% Acreage				
	VP	P	F	G	EX
Winter Wheat Dryland	1	2	24	61	12
Winter Wheat Irrigated	0	0	7	75	18
Spring Wheat Dryland	0	0	64	36	0
Spring Wheat Irrigated	0	0	22	78	0
Barley Dryland	0	0	58	42	0
Barley Irrigated	0	0	33	67	0

VP=Very Poor P=Poor F=Fair G=Good EX=Excellent

- \* Crop conditions are a measurement of the growing conditions and are not indicative of the quality of the crop produced.

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# COUNTY COMMENTS

## Western

**Grays Harbor/Lewis/Pacific:** Another week of cool wet weather has kept most of agriculture in a "pause" mode. Forage growth has been slow and fieldwork has been at a standstill.

**Grays Harbor (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Unseasonably cold, wet weather continued to limit agricultural activity throughout the county. Vegetable growers were faced with plowing very wet soils in order to prepare fields for planting sweet corn. Christmas tree growers continued fertilizing trees and applying herbicides between showers. Greenhouse tomato growers reported good fruit set on early varieties. Livestock producers complained that super saturated soils and standing water in fields was delaying forage harvest (green chop). Home gardeners continued to battle slugs and weeds.

**Mason:** We had soggy weather and about 2 and 3/4 inches of intermittent rain all week. Wind and thunderstorms made it difficult to work outside. Livestock were still confined and fed out, pastures were too soggy.

**Mason (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** With more than three inches of rain this week (and even some large hail), field work was put on hold, animals were kept off pastures, and home gardeners were forced inside. Overcast skies with very little sunshine slowed down greenhouse germination, delaying nursery production. Next week's predicted sunshine will be a welcome change.

**Pacific:** Standing water and continued wet weather conditions severely limited field activities for most producers. The only exception was with shellfish growers, who work in standing water under normal conditions. Oyster harvesting and seed planting operations continued.

**Pierce/South King:** Crop conditions remained normal for this time of year. No unusual situations were reported for the week ending April 17th. No report of crop damage due to the weather.

**Pierce (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Hay fields were beginning to show growth improvements. Some of the bottom land fields can not be worked at this time due to standing

water which was not present until the middle of this week. One wine producer told me this week that it looked like this last week of heavy rain has given his vines the boost they have needed to make a substantial crop this year.

**San Juan:** Cool and dry last week. Not much rain. Early apples were at 100 percent bloom, mid season apples were at 30 percent bloom and European pears were at 15 percent bloom.

**Skagit/Island/San Juan:** Weather was wet and cool. No fieldwork was completed for the past week. No crop damage reported.

**Snohomish/King:** Heavy rains at the beginning and end of the week slowed fieldwork. Some areas accumulated over three inches. Most pastures were in good condition. Some had standing water due to heavy rains. Most apples and pears were in full bloom. Stone fruit bloom was in decline.

**Thurston:** Cold, wet weather throughout the week continued to limit most agricultural activity. Soils remained super-saturated due to the persistent rain showers. Christmas tree growers reported that they were behind in making herbicide applications due to the wet weather. Turfgrass growers continued mowing, fertilizing and harvesting fields under less than ideal conditions. Livestock producers expressed frustration that forage fields were ready to green chop, but many had standing water due to the heavy rains over the past several weeks. Ornamental nurseries reported lack luster sales due to the cold, wet weather. Blueberry growers mowed cover crops between rows.

**Thurston (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Calving continued. Lots of rain, with intermittent sun breaks. It was cold with periodic hail. There were brief windy conditions. The ground was very soggy and pond's were full.

**Whatcom:** This past week was a wet one with several days of rain showers. Surface water continued to accumulate resulting in large pools of standing water in many fields. Temperatures rose to a range of 40 degrees to 60 degrees. Fieldwork was limited to some activity in higher ground berry fields.

## Central

**Benton:** Growers were trying to figure out how to deal with reduced water deliveries. Frost protection was necessary on several days this week. Asparagus cutting had begun.

**Benton (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** We had some spotty showers this week. The temperatures were cooler and we had a lot of frost control activity. Roza irrigation was still without any water. No reports of damage were received.

**Chelan/Douglas:** Freezing temperatures were experienced in parts of the county. Fruit trees were hit. An estimated five percent of the apple crop was affected. Soft fruit trees were in bloom and were also affected, however losses are unknown at this time. Pear trees were beginning to bloom. Light precipitation was received in spots throughout the county. High winds were experienced. Livestock producers were beginning to release their cows into spring pastures. The winter wheat crop looked to be in better condition than expected, given the dry conditions. Timely future rains will make or break the crop.

**Chelan/Douglas/Okanogan:** Some scattered frost damage was reported but most apples, pears and cherries continued with adequate to good flower loads. Growers were ready to combat frost, but expected a period of much warmer temperatures to reduce that possibility. There were concerns about possible irrigation water shortages starting in August, but most acreages will not likely face significant shortages that would reduce crop or quality.

**Franklin:** Alfalfa growth was slow due to cooler conditions. Asparagus has emerged and harvesting had begun. Good quality hay continued to be in short supply.

**Franklin (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Spotty showers throughout the week aided some of the dryland wheat. Although more countywide spring precipitation was needed to support an average dryland wheat yield this year. Spring tillage continued for many row crops. Asparagus harvest continued. Potato planting continued. There was seven days of good farming weather.

**Garfield:** Worms devoured wheat in some locations on the Palouse.

**Grant:** Rains received over the weekend have improved both dryland wheat and native pastures. Some reports received were indicating some frost damage to both apple and cherry orchards on April

12-14. The planting of potato and fresh peas continued. Grain corn was also being planted.

**Grant (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Dairy and export quality hay was in very short supply. Adequate feeder hay was still available.

**Kittitas:** Conditions remained very dry. The Kittitas Valley received .01 inches of rain over the weekend, but nothing of sizable amount. It was noted in last week's report that districts with junior rights, such as the Kittitas Reclamation District, will be given a cut of 66 percent of the water supply, which means they can use up to 34 percent of the normal allotment. Forecasts predicted warmer weather, high 50's - low 60's for the remainder of next week. Unfortunately, no mention of rain.

**Kittitas (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Some irrigators have water turned on. Range conditions were very dry, with some early maturing annual grasses already drying up. Cheatgrass was currently very edible where it had enough moisture to come up. Higher elevations received good precipitation this week. Some cattle were on pasture, but most pastures were just now approaching usability.

**Klickitat:** Cold, wet, windy weather this past week throughout the area. Hard frosts were in some local areas.

**Lincoln:** Crops looked good but they need warm days and no frost at night.

**Lincoln (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Lincoln County received some precipitation last week but much more was needed to improve soil moisture conditions and maintain winter wheat crop. Spring seeding was progressing and will nearly be completed by the end of next week if weather remains nice.

**Lincoln (3<sup>rd</sup> Report):** Intermittent rain throughout the week helped spring planting conditions. Winter wheat looked good for the majority of the county, and the potential for equally good spring crops also existed due to the occurrence of precipitation during the past weeks. Pasture conditions have additionally improved due to spring moisture and warmer weather.

**Yakima:** Average temperatures varied from nine degrees below normal to three degrees above normal, with 0.1 inch of precipitation. Growers have reported concerns about damage to fruit crops due to temperatures as low as 20 degrees this past week.

## Eastern

**Adams:** We received a little precipitation last week. Much more was needed to improve soil moisture conditions and maintain winter wheat crop.

**Adams (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** A few passing showers midweek didn't add up to any appreciable rainfall. Winter wheat continued to look good. Hay was beginning to move and could use a bit warmer weather and a little less wind. Fertilizing activities were underway for many summer fallow operations.

**Asotin:** Spring planting progressed rapidly with only the upper elevations that remained to be seeded. Showers over the weekend provided much needed moisture in most areas. Winter wheat remained in good condition. More rain will be needed for continued normal crop development. Rangeland pastures in many areas were still in poor condition as grass growth was slow due to the drought and cool temperatures in April. More rain and warm weather is needed for growth.

**Ferry/Okanogan:** Total rainfall for the week was about .16 inches (scattered throughout the counties). With recent warm weather, early season grasses were growing well although it will be about a week to 10 days before cattle go to spring pasture. Most irrigation districts were up and running and have provided irrigation water. Most cherry varieties were in full bloom and the threat of frost was a problem with temperatures in the mid 20's. There have been a few reports of frost damage to cherries. Growers were still running wind machines and other types of frost protection. Top soil moisture should be adequate for spring grain plantings.

**Lincoln:** Lincoln County received some precipitation last week but much more was needed to improve soil moisture conditions and maintain winter wheat crop. Spring seeding was progressing and will nearly be completed by the end of the week if weather remains nice.

**Pend Oreille:** Temperatures for the week were 57 degrees high, 26 degrees low and 7/10 inches of precipitation. Pasture and hay fields continued to grow. Only one day of full sunshine, two days of sun and rain and four days of overcast. Livestock was still being fed 2004 hay.

**Pend Oreille/Spokane:** Another week of typical

spring weather, rain, hail, snow, and some sunshine. Fieldwork was limited depending on the area being farmed. Some spraying was going on with winter wheat and bluegrass. Warm days would be helpful, but some of the early seeded wheat was finally starting to show.

**Stevens:** Four to five inches of growth on pasture.

**Stevens (2<sup>nd</sup> Report):** Rain occurred several times during the past week with heavy rain most of the day on Saturday. Winter wheat and alfalfa crops currently looked good. Pastures received a good soaking and were just waiting for warm temperatures to begin rapid growth. Cattle producers were cleaning up the last of their hay and looking forward to moving cows and calves to spring pasture.

**Stevens (3<sup>rd</sup> Report):** Rain continued to give an adequate supply of moisture. Only question will be the supply of water in late June and on.

**Walla Walla:** Cool temperatures and rain showers continued to give area producers renewed hope of good crops this year. Area crops appeared to be in good shape. Producers were still working on completing spring planting.

**Whitman:** Precipitation seemed to be on track for a normal April month. So far measurements at the Colfax USDA Service Center are at .76 inches for the month with normal at 1.57 inches. Precipitation of .26 inches was received over the weekend with fairly heavy rains Saturday night. Some areas of the county still experienced dryer than normal conditions. Cattle producers from the Hooper area reported only 1.10 inches since the rainfall began in March compared with close to 4.00 inches near the Idaho-Washington border and 3 inches at the service center. Cattle producers were very concerned about pasture loss and estimated a 50 percent loss of pasture in the west end of the county because of drought conditions. Winter wheat conditions looked excellent and spring cereals were beginning to emerge. Producers were working on seeding pulses and attempted to spray winter wheat. This week was a frustrating week for those trying to spray. Friday was the best day of the week with only very light winds. Producers reported very windy conditions this week throughout the county making spraying challenging.

# Weekly Weather Statistics

April 18, 2005

Station	Air Temperature				Growing Degree Days				Last Week Precipitation			Season Precipitation			
	LO	HI	AVG	DFN	Base 50F		Base 60F		Total			Total		% Normal	Days
					TOT	DFN	TOT	DFN	Inches	DFN	Days	Inches	DFN		
<b>WEST</b>															
Bellingham	32	55	45	-3	0	-7	0	0	2.23	1.60	5	33.07	4.73	117	117
Everett	37	56	46	-3	1	-6	0	0	1.52	0.89	7	21.99	-6.37	78	118
Hoquiam	34	54	46	-4	0	-11	0	0	3.52	2.45	7	47.79	-10.25	82	134
Kelso	32	59	46	-4	4	-10	0	0	2.01	1.20	7	20.18	-17.64	53	90
Olympia	29	58	44	-4	2	-5	0	0	2.29	1.50	7	32.02	-11.70	73	118
Sea-Tac	36	55	46	-4	2	-7	0	0	1.76	1.20	5	24.96	-6.38	80	99
Shelton	31	57	44	-6	1	-13	0	0	3.18	2.21	7	46.22	-11.14	81	115
Tacoma	30	57	45	-5	1	-8	0	0	1.11	0.44	4	21.04	-11.71	64	88
Vancouver	37	58	48	-2	4	-10	0	0	1.48	0.84	7	21.56	-12.77	63	109
<b>CENTRAL</b>															
Ellensburg	22	59	45	-3	2	-5	0	0	0.08	-0.06	2	4.18	-2.82	60	58
Stampede Pass	25	45	35	2	0	0	0	0	1.32	0.14	7	51.25	-18.40	74	124
Wenatchee	31	59	46	-5	0	-19	0	0	0.04	-0.12	2	4.32	-1.98	69	50
Yakima AP	20	62	44	-6	5	-10	0	0	0.16	0.02	3	3.96	-2.33	63	54
<b>NORTHEAST</b>															
Colville	27	62	46	1	2	-5	0	0	0.94	0.59	4	14.25	-0.82	95	70
Deer Park	22	55	43	-3	0	-7	0	0	0.39	0.09	3	13.23	-0.14	99	81
Spokane AP	30	61	45	-2	4	-3	0	0	0.16	-0.10	6	8.17	-3.78	68	69
<b>EAST CENTRAL</b>															
Ephrata	25	60	45	-6	2	-18	0	0	0.16	0.06	3	3.36	-2.17	61	41
Moses Lake	25	62	46	-6	4	-16	0	0	0.28	0.18	4	3.41	-2.12	62	40
Quincy	27	60	46	-5	1	-17	0	0	0.25	0.11	3	3.32	-2.61	56	36
Ritzville	26	59	43	-4	0	-7	0	0	0.20	-0.01	4	5.91	-2.70	69	44
<b>SOUTHEAST</b>															
Hanford	28	65	49	-5	12	-23	0	-5	0.03	-0.05	2	2.62	-2.39	52	33
Pasco	29	68	51	-3	19	-12	0	-3	0.06	-0.01	2	3.51	-2.28	61	45
Pullman	30	68	45	0	6	-1	0	0	0.39	0.04	4	4.21	-11.66	27	51
Whitman Miss.	28	70	49	-3	10	-10	0	-5	0.74	0.46	3	7.53	-2.63	74	69
<b>ID PANHANDLE</b>															
Coeur D' A' AP	30	64	45	-2	4	-3	0	0	0.04	-0.35	1	9.44	-9.62	50	54
Lewiston ID	33	69	50	0	20	-1	0	-2	1.10	0.82	3	6.64	-1.27	84	65

Summary based on NWS data.

Season Cumulative Precip Starts: Wednesday September 1, 2004

DFN = Departure From Normal (Using 1961-90 Normals Period).

NA = Data Unavailable

Precipitation (rain or melted snow/ice) in inches.

Precipitation Days = Days with precip of 0.01 inch or more.

Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit.

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